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FM AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1130  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0906  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0295  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 0305  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0296  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0362  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0269  
RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE 0364  
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STATE FOR CA/VO, CA/FPP, EAP/CM, EAP/PD and ECA  
BEIJING FOR DCM, CONS AND PAS  
STATE PASS DEPT OF EDUCATION

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SUBJECT: CONSULATE GUANGZHOU STEPS UP STUDENT OUTREACH

REF: A) Guangzhou 631 B) Guangzhou 578

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: ConGen Guangzhou continues to bolster its student outreach efforts as its F-1 student visa refusal rate -- historically the highest among China posts -- drops incrementally year over year. In 2009, Guangzhou refused 28% of student visa applicants, a large drop compared to 38% in 2008 and 43% in 2007. Meanwhile, the number of F-1 visa applications has nearly doubled to 14,000 over the past two years. Demand for student visas seems insatiable. This was reflected at a recent student outreach event held by Guangzhou NIV and Public Affairs sections to commemorate International Education Week. It drew a standing-room only crowd of students eager to learn about studying in the U.S. and the visa application process. Post hopes its continued outreach efforts will yield better informed and prepared student applicants while also making inroads on the Chinese public's yawning perception gap between actual issuance and mistakenly surmised refusal rates. END OF SUMMARY

¶2. (U) ConGen Guangzhou has stepped up its student visa outreach activities in response to a recent influx of new F-1 visa applications. At least once or twice a month, officers from NIV and PAS sections meet hundreds of prospective student visa applicants through education expos held by consultancies that help U.S. universities recruit in China. There is consistently a long line of aspiring students whose parents make middle-class income but have saved tens of thousands of dollars to send their child to study in the U.S. A recent FPU site visit to the historically fraud-prone province of Fujian revealed that even families who live in modest to poor conditions have saved large sums of money to send their child to the U.S. to study. As noted in ref A, post is indeed finding a growing pool of qualified student applicants in the consular district.

¶3. (U) During International Education Week, the NIV Unit hosted an outreach activity, drawing nearly 100 English-speaking college and high school students. They packed into the PAS multipurpose room to listen to presentations about what American admissions officers look for in college applications and what consular officers look for in a student visa interview. This new generation of Chinese students is likely to help push the number of annual student visa issuances in Mission China past 100,000 in FY 2010. In FY 2009, Mission China issued 81,686 student visas. Open Doors 2009 reported recently that Chinese student enrollment in the U.S. increased 21% to 98,510.

¶4. (U) In Guangzhou's four province south China consular district, one of the wealthiest in China, the growing Chinese middle class includes the rising ranks of qualified student visa applicants.

However, fraud remains problematic in a district that has historically experienced intense overseas migration. Post continues to see some qualified student applicants who still feel the need to make fraudulent claims, for example, about their parent's income. However, in 2007, post conducted a validation study, which found that only 4% of student visas issued were out-of-status, thus confirming the accuracy of student visa adjudications by consular officers. Since then, the number of student visa issuances has doubled. With a higher volume of visa issuances, post plans to conduct a validation study again to review student status and visa adjudication criteria.

15. (U) COMMENT: In response to the growing interest in student visas in Guangzhou, post will begin to host a monthly outreach event similar to the one hosted during International Education Week. NIV and PAS expect to draw more than 100 different students every time. This initiative will be in addition to post's regular participation in local education conferences as well as its broader consular public outreach efforts covering business travel, tourism, etc. End comment.

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